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Information regarding food products
and prices...estimates of appropriations
... 1930.

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60th CONGRESS, { HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. { DOCUMENT
1st Session. { No. 187.

INFORMATION REGARDING FOOD PRODUCTS AND PRICES.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

COPY OF A COMMUNICATION FROM THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, SUBMITTING ESTIMATE OF APPROPRIATIONS WHICH WILL BE NECESSARY TO ENABLE THAT DEPARTMENT TO FURNISH TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION REGARDING THE STOCKS OF FOOD PRODUCTS HELD IN STORAGE AND RETAIL FOOD PRICES.

AUGUST 14, 1919.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, August 13, 1919.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for the consideration of Congress copy of a communication of the Secretary of Agriculture of the 12th instant, submitting estimates of appropriations which will be necessary to enable that department to furnish to the people of the United States information regarding the stocks of food products held in storage and retail food prices, in accordance with the recommendations which the President made to Congress in his message of August 8, as follows:

Cold storage supplies of perishable foods.....	\$50, 000
Storage and large commercial supplies of cereals, sugar, and canned goods...	78, 000
Continuation of authority now carried in section 2 of the food production act (legislation).	
Retail food price information.....	125, 000
Market news service on fruits and vegetables.....	119, 660
Market news service on live stock and meats.....	109, 400
Market news service on dairy and poultry products.....	20, 000
Total.....	502, 060

The purposes for which these several appropriations are desired are fully set forth in the accompanying communication of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Respectfully,

CARTER GLASS, *Secretary.*

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Washington, August 12, 1919.

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith estimates of the appropriations which will be necessary to enable this department to furnish to the people of the United States information regarding the stocks of food products held in storage and retail food prices, in accordance with the recommendations which the President made to Congress in his message of August 8.

Cold-storage supplies of perishable foods: For this item the following wording is suggested:

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to compile and publish at stated intervals reports concerning the perishable food products received by, held in, or delivered from cold-storage warehouses and packing plants in the United States, and to pay all expenses necessary in the performance of this work, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means in the city of Washington and elsewhere..... \$50,000

The cold-storage reports now issued by the department do not cover the ground as adequately and are not issued as promptly as desirable. With an appropriation of \$50,000 complete reports will be issued at an earlier date than is now possible; certain important commodities will be reported twice a month, and tabulations also will be made showing the monthly movement in and out of storage. Under present conditions reports from the Western States do not, in many cases, arrive until the 12th of the month, and, owing to the delay caused by following up delinquent firms, it is impossible to publish the information before the 15th. With the proposed appropriation reports from the far West will be sent in by telegraph and delinquent firms also will be communicated with by wire. If this is done, it will be possible to publish the summary on the 10th of the month. Information regarding the movement of products in and out of storage can not be tabulated with the present force, although it is now obtained.

Storage and large commercial supplies of cereals, sugar, and canned goods:

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to compile and publish at stated intervals reports concerning the supplies of cereals, sugar, canned goods, and other nonperishable food products held by storage warehouses, manufacturers, and wholesalers in the United States, and to pay all expenses necessary in the performance of this work, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means in the City of Washington and elsewhere..... \$78,000

It is believed that monthly reports should be issued to show the stocks of important food commodities held by elevators, mills, warehouses, and wholesale dealers. These reports would show the quantity of certain commodities held in storage or stock each month, the number of firms by which held, and would give comparative figures for the current and preceding year. Among the commodities to be reported would be wheat, corn, oats, barley, rye, wheat flour, white; whole-wheat and graham flour, barley flour, rye flour, corn flour, corn meal, beans, rice, rolled oats, canned salmon, canned tomatoes, canned corn, sugar, condensed milk, and evaporated milk.

Continuation of authority now carried in section 2 of the food production act: It would be very desirable, in this connection, to make provision for the continuation of the authority now carried in section 2 of the food production act. It is suggested that the following language will accomplish the purpose in view:

The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to investigate and ascertain the demand for, the supply, consumption, costs, and prices of, and the basic facts relating to the ownership, production, transportation, manufacture, storage, and distribution of foods, food materials, feeds, seeds, fertilizers, agricultural implements and machinery, and any article required in connection with the production, distribution, or utilization of food. For such purposes all the provisions of section 2 of the act approved August 10, 1917 (40 Stat., 273) shall continue and hereafter be in force notwithstanding anything contained in section 12 of said act.

Without this authority, the department would be dependent, in reality, upon the voluntary cooperation of the businesses involved, and experience clearly demonstrates that, under such conditions, the value of the information secured is greatly restricted.

Retail food price information:

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to furnish to consumers, newspapers, producers, and dealers accurate information regarding supplies of fruits, vegetables, dairy and poultry products, meats, fish, and other food products received on farmers', municipal, and other city markets, and prices for which such products are sold; and information regarding such products when in abundance or oversupply, and other related matters, and to pay all necessary expenses therefor, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means, in the city of Washington and elsewhere..... \$125, 000

To be of value, supply and price information as it affects food in a given community must be made available in that community daily or, at least, two or three times a week. The information for the benefit of consumers must be published in the newspapers of the city, since in no other way can large numbers of consumers be reached. The information for the benefit of farmers, which, through its tendency to stabilize the market and to prevent loss, also benefits consumers, must be mimeographed and gotten into the hands of the farmers either through the mails or by distribution on farmers' markets. This work requires an office in the city, equipped with desks, tables, chairs, typewriters, addressing machines, mimeograph machines, etc., and manned by an agent and, in most cases, a typist assistant. In very large cities a staff of three or four workers may be required in order that the necessary information may be collected expeditiously and prepared for publication without delay. Unless the information be timely it will be of little value.

The cost of a service for making public information in regard to retail prices will depend to a very large extent upon the number of cities in which the service is to be maintained and their size. It is assumed that the primary idea is to make the information available to as many of the consumers of the country as possible at the least possible expense. It is believed that this can best be accomplished by establishing a service in the largest cities of the country, since one organization in a very large city can reach several times the number of consumers that could be reached by a single organization in a city

of moderate size. The sum indicated above is based on a service in 20 of the largest cities of the country, probably as follows:

New York, N. Y.	San Francisco, Calif.
Chicago, Ill.	Milwaukee, Wis.
Philadelphia, Pa.	Cincinnati, Ohio.
St. Louis, Mo.	New Orleans, La.
Boston, Mass.	Minneapolis, Minn.
Cleveland, Ohio.	Washington, D. C.
Baltimore, Md.	Seattle, Wash.
Pittsburgh, Pa.	Kansas City, Mo.
Los Angeles, Calif.	Portland, Oreg.
Buffalo, N. Y.	Indianapolis, Ind.

The city of Detroit, Mich., is not included, as it is hoped that the municipality of Detroit, which now maintains a similar service, will cooperate with the department in this work. If such cooperation is maintained, it may be necessary to pay the salary of a clerk. The cities of Newark and Jersey City are not included, because it is felt that prices published in New York will be more or less applicable to them.

There are being maintained at the present time, at the expense of the State of Connecticut, services similar to those for which these estimates provide, in the cities of New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Norwich, Conn. The Bureau of Markets maintains cooperative relations with these services and they can doubtless be coordinated with the larger work for which these estimates are submitted.

Telegraphic market news services: The department feels that service of much value in the present emergency can be rendered to the country at this time by the conduct of its market news services on fruits and vegetables and live stock and meats on an adequate scale. These services facilitate distribution and furnish information which makes it possible to avoid market gluts. Their operation has a most important bearing on the problem of supplying the markets in large cities with fresh food.

At the time the appropriation bill for the current year was under consideration in May, the committee was requested to grant the amounts shown below for this work. The amounts finally appropriated are indicated. It is believed that the difference between the amounts appropriated and the amounts requested by the department should now be appropriated.

	Amount requested.	Amount appropriated.	Difference.
Market news service on fruits and vegetables.....	\$369,660	\$250,000	\$119,660
Market news service on live stock and meats.....	214,720	105,520	109,400
Market news service on dairy products.....	100,600	80,600	20,000

The present appropriations for this work are so inadequate that it will be necessary on September 30 to discontinue the leased wire service for fruits and vegetables and dairy products west of Kansas City. Earnest protests against this proposed action have been received from producers' organizations, commercial bodies, and western Representatives in Congress. The leased wire service on live stock and meats has been discontinued west of Kansas City, and all leased

wires and branch offices south of Cincinnati and Kansas City have already been closed for both news services. These services are particularly valuable and adapted to western districts which are located great distances from the chief market outlets. Without them those districts will be deprived of official information on conditions prevailing in the East, and western producers will be forced to rely on such market information as may be supplied by the trade. The service of the department to growers in every part of the country will be curtailed and fragmentary under present funds.

Market news service on fruits and vegetables:

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to collect and distribute, by telegraph, mail, and otherwise timely information on the supply, commercial movement, disposition, and market prices of fruits and vegetables and to pay all necessary expenses in connection therewith, including, printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means in the city of Washington and elsewhere, in addition to any amounts appropriated for such purposes in the act making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1920, approved July 24, 1919..... \$119, 660

Market news service on live stock and meats:

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to gather information relative to the number of different classes and grades of marketable live stock, especially cattle, hogs, and sheep in the principal live-stock feeding districts and growing sections; prices, receipts, and shipments of the different classes and grades of cattle, hogs, and sheep at live-stock market centers; prices of meats, fish, and meat and fish food products and the amounts of such products in storage; to compile and publish such information at such frequent intervals as most effectively to guide producers, consumers, and distributors in the sale and purchase of live stock, meats, fish, and animal products; and to gather and publish any related information pertaining to marketing and distribution of live stock, meats, fish, and animal by-products, and to pay all necessary expenses in connection therewith, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means in the city of Washington and elsewhere, in addition to any amounts appropriated for such purposes in the act making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1920, approved July 24, 1919..... \$109, 400

Market news service on dairy and poultry products:

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to collect and distribute by telegraph, mail, and otherwise, timely information on the supply, demand, commercial movement, disposition, quality, and market prices of dairy and poultry products and to pay all necessary expenses in connection therewith, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means, in the city of Washington and elsewhere, in addition to any amounts appropriated for such purpose in the act making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1920, approved July 24, 1919..... \$20, 000

Respectfully,

D. F. HOUSTON, *Secretary.*

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

Supplemental estimates of appropriations required for the service of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1920, by the Department of Agriculture.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Cold storage supplies of perishable foods—

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to compile and publish at stated intervals reports concerning the perishable food products received by, held in, or delivered from cold-storage warehouses and packing plants in the United States, and to pay all expenses necessary in the performance of this work, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means in the city of Washington, and elsewhere..... \$50, 000

Storage and large commercial supplies of cereals, sugar, and canned goods—

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to compile and publish at stated intervals reports concerning the supplies of cereals, sugar, canned goods, and other nonperishable food products held by storage warehouses, manufacturers, and wholesalers in the United States, and to pay all expenses necessary in the performance of this work, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means in the city of Washington and elsewhere..... 78, 000

Continuation of authority now carried in section 2 of the food production act—

The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to investigate and ascertain the demand for, the supply, consumption, costs, and prices of, and the basic facts relating to the ownership, production, transportation, manufacture, storage, and distribution of, foods, food materials, feeds, seeds, fertilizers, agricultural implements and machinery, and any article required in connection with the production, distribution, or utilization of food. For such purposes all the provisions of section 2 of the act approved August 10, 1917 (40 Stat., 273), shall continue and hereafter be in force notwithstanding anything contained in section 12 of said act.

Retail food price information—

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to furnish to consumers, newspapers, producers, and dealers accurate information regarding supplies of fruits, vegetables, dairy and poultry products, meats, fish, and other food products received on farmers', municipal, and other city markets, and prices for which such products are sold; and information regarding such products when in abundance or oversupply, and other related matters, and to pay all necessary expenses therefor, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means in the city of Washington and elsewhere 125, 000

Market news service on fruits and vegetables—

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to collect and distribute, by telegraph, mail, and otherwise timely information on the supply, commercial movement, disposition, and market prices of fruits and vegetables and to pay all necessary expenses in connection therewith, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means in the city of Washington and elsewhere, in addition to any amounts appropriated for such purposes in the act making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1920, approved July 24, 1919..... 119, 660

Market news service on live stock and meats—

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to gather information relative to the number of different classes and grades of marketable live stock, especially cattle, hogs, and sheep in the principal live-stock feeding districts and growing sections; prices, receipts, and shipments of the different classes and grades of cattle, hogs, and sheep at live-stock market centers; prices of meats, fish, and meat and fish food products and the amounts of such products in storage; to compile and publish such information at such frequent intervals as most effectively to guide producers, consumers, and distributors in the sale and purchase of live stock, meats, fish, and animal products; and to gather and publish any related information pertaining to marketing and distribution of live stock, meats, fish, and animal by-products, and to pay all necessary expenses in connection therewith, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means in the city of Washington and elsewhere, in addition to any amounts appropriated for such purposes in the act making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1920, approved July 24, 1919..... 109, 400

Market news service on dairy and poultry products—

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to collect and distribute by telegraph, mail, and otherwise timely information on the supply, demand, commercial movement, disposition, quality, and market prices of dairy and poultry products and to pay all necessary expenses in connection therewith, including printing, rent, and the employment of persons and means, in the city of Washington and elsewhere, in addition to any amounts appropriated for such purpose in the act making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1920, approved July 24, 1919..... \$20,000

Total..... 502,060







